

From: Cindy Brockwell
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Senator Wentworth column
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Dead People DO Vote

**by Jeff Wentworth
State Senator, District 25**

Dead people may not vote in huge numbers, but 239 deceased voters appear to have cast ballots this year alone, according to our state's director of elections.

The Texas Voter Photo-ID trial against the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) ended earlier this month. The U.S. District Court could rule by the end of August.

Texas counties are legally required to maintain current voter registration rolls, but testimony revealed that Travis County has not removed deceased voters from the rolls in five years. Eighteen counties have more people on the voter rolls than live in the county.

In addition, 394 people have been cancelled from the voter rolls for non-citizenship since September 1, 2011.

In its arguments, the DOJ failed miserably in its attempt to prove why voter photo-IDs should not be approved in Texas. In its list of voters who lack government-issued photo identification, it included the following:

- 50,000 dead voters,
- 330,377 voters over the age of 65 (who can vote by mail without ID),
- 261,887 voters who had included a driver's license number on their voter registration form, and
- 800,000 voters who were then successfully matched by the state.

Countless voters were included on the DOJ's no-identification list, including U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, former U.S. Senator Phil Gramm, and former President George W. Bush.

In addition, the DOJ's list of no-id voters failed to exclude voters who have passports and military IDs, former Texas residents who have moved to other states and non-citizens who are improperly registered to vote.

I co-authored Senate Bill 14, the voter photo-ID bill, during the last legislative session. It is this bill's implementation that is being challenged by Washington lawyers.

Other states require photo IDs to vote, but Texas falls under Title V of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. We are required to receive preclearance from the DOJ before we make any changes to our voting laws.

Those who call this a new "poll tax" are, in my opinion, simply trying to stir up their voter bases before the November general elections.

Texans who do not have a photo ID may obtain a free Election Identification Certificate from a Department of Public Safety (DPS) office.

During the hearing, a DOJ witness from San Antonio testified that she had no driver's license, and her parents were too busy to take her to DPS to obtain one. She explained, however, how she was able to get transportation to the airport, fly to Baltimore, and catch a train to Washington, DC, so she could testify in federal court about her inability to get to the DPS office in San Antonio.

Should Texas lose this suit, I expect the case to go to the U.S. Supreme Court. The voter photo-ID law is essential to ensure the sanctity of the ballot box. Only those Texans who are citizens and legally qualified to vote should be allowed to cast a ballot.

Our system of elected representation should never be compromised.

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